



SKI FOR LIGHT, INC.

SKI FOR LIGHT BULLETIN

Fall 2013

News and Information about the People and Programs of SFL International Skiing. Sharing. Learning.

The mission of Ski for Light is to enhance the quality of life and independence of visually or mobility-impaired adults through a program of cross country skiing.

Ski for Light, Inc., 1455 West Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN 55408-2648
Phone: 612-827-3232 - Web Site: www.sfl.org - General Information: Info@sfl.org

President's Message

By Marion Elmquist

It's time to start thinking about SFL 2014 and what promises to be a great week of skiing in Anchorage, Alaska. You'll read more in this Bulletin from Event Chair, Nancy McKinney, who is busy working with her Planning Committee team to organize all the details of the event. Kincaid Park is a new ski venue for us and some of us checked out the trails this past Spring. I think you will be very pleased with the skiing and accommodations.

A very important event is coming up later this Fall for Ski for Light, the Board elections. The SFL Board of Directors has the vital job of managing the affairs of the organization. Over the years, the decisions that have been made and the path the Board has followed have kept Ski for Light a vibrant organization. I encourage you to consider serving on the Board along with other dedicated volunteers who are passionate about our important program. If you are interested in running, or know someone who is, you can nominate that person or yourself. Elsewhere in this Bulletin is Wendy David's article with more information about the upcoming election.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in Anchorage. Don't forget to apply on the SFL website: www.sfl.org.



Welcome to Alaska!



From the 2014 Event Chair Ski for Light in Anchorage: The Double-Poler Express!

By Nancy McKinney

It's getting close enough to dream about: Ski for Light 2014. I am so looking forward to a great 39th Annual International Week with my Ski for Light family in amazing Anchorage, a truly beautiful setting. Join us Sunday, February 23rd to Sunday, March 2nd for great skiing and socializing on the trails and around town. We'll be staying at the Hilton Hotel in downtown Anchorage, close to some of the city's top restaurants and bars; the hotel has a great indoor swimming pool, hot tub and plenty of meeting space. We'll be skiing at one of the top Nordic spots in the U.S, Kincaid Park, a short drive away from the hotel. Kincaid Park is a world class ski area with 60 km of professionally groomed cross-country ski trails.

I strongly encourage veteran skiers to bring your own skis, poles and boots. There is likely to be a limited supply of rental skis available, and we want to ensure that our first-timers will have access to the equipment they expect.

This year's event has an added attraction that you won't want to miss and that anyone who joined us there in 2003 can vouch for: Saturday March 1 - usually the day for our Race/Rally - will feature the ceremonial start of The Last Great Race on Earth®: The Iditarod. This historic dogsled race will kick off just a walk from the Hilton, and we'll be there to participate and to enjoy the festivities leading up to and surrounding the race. We'll hold our Race/Rally on Friday, February 28, so we can all attend the ceremony. To learn more and to see what else will be going on, check out:

- Fur Rondy (Fur Rendezvous Festival) furrondy.net
- Iditarod ceremonial start (Iditarod)
- Tour of Anchorage (tourofanchorage.com). This cross country ski race will be held on Sunday, March 2nd. As promised, Julie Coppens - who skied the Tour earlier this year - tells us about it in an article in this issue of the Bulletin. Many SFLers may want to stick around an extra night to participate, and Julie's article will give you the details you need.

Visit Anchorage, the local tourism board, made these suggestions for finding flights to Alaska: use the travel section of Bing's website – Kayak's

website works almost exactly the same way. You plug in your cities and travel dates and it will show you every flight available – from all the individual airlines, as well as Travelocity, Expedia, Priceline, Hotwire, etc. Bing shows if prices are trending up or down, which is helpful. On Kayak you can set up a price alert, and they notify you if great fares become available.

The Planning Committee met in Anchorage in October and has been working hard to ensure an exciting week for all attendees. There will be plenty of evening activities, our Silent Auction, special-interest sessions and more. Can't wait to see and ski with you all!

SFL Board to Elect New Members in Anchorage

By Wendy David

Would you like to be involved in the inner workings of Ski for Light? Are you interested in Running for Election to the Ski for Light Board of Directors? Now is your chance to get involved by submitting your nomination to the Ski for Light Board.

Ski for Light is governed and managed by an elected Board of Directors made up of Approximately 25 guides, participants, and others. The Board is a working Board, with each member expected to take an active role in some aspect of the work we do. Approximately half of the seats on the Board will be up for election in February 2014. Any interested person may nominate himself/herself. You may also nominate another person, as long as you have that person's permission.

Nominations should include:

- (1) the nominee's name, address, phone, and e-mail address;
- (2) a biographical paragraph that contains a description of past and/or current involvement in the work of Ski for Light;
- (3) a statement about possible future areas of involvement or responsibility that would be of interest to the nominee; and
- (4) anything else that the nominee thinks is important or relevant.

All nominations will be considered and the election results will be announced on Friday, February 21, 2014 at the annual Board Meeting in Anchorage, Alaska. The deadline for receipt of nominations is January 12, 2014.

Please send all nominations by e-mail to Scott McCall, Chair of the SFL Board Development and Elections Committee at scottmccall3@comcast.net by January 12, 2014. If you have any questions, please contact Scott by email or call him at 404-702-5739. Get involved!

Tips on the Tour of Anchorage

By Julie York Coppens

Granted: after six days of hard SFL skiing, most of us *don't* spend the flight home on Sunday thinking, "If only I could have fit in another 25K!" Extreme laundry and marathon napping are the only endurance sports on my mind at the end of a typical Ski for Light week.

But this year will be different. In fact, I plan to wake up early Sunday morning on March 2nd, pull on whatever wicking and warming layers I have left—though by that point I'm afraid everything in my suitcase will smell like an Iditarod sled dog who's been sneaking tacos—and line up with my intrepid blind skiing partner, Peter Slatin of New York, along with nearly two thousand other Nordic enthusiasts from across Alaska and beyond, for the 2014 Tour of Anchorage. Winding along the city's spectacular Coastal Trail, the Tour is part of the American Ski Marathon Series, the big time for enthusiastic amateurs like us, and it's usually the second most-popular event of its kind in North America. (The American Birkebeiner in Wisconsin is bigger.) Skiers in Anchorage compete in distances of 25, 40, or 50 kilometers, in separate divisions for classic skiing - parallel Nordic style, as we do at SFL - and freestyle, a.k.a. skate-skiing, which is popular with the young-uns, the uber-fit, and fans of brightly patterned Spandex.

Last year I skied the 25K Classic race for the first time, alongside my good friend and SFL 2014 Event Chair Nancy McKinney, joining Tour veterans Ken Leghorn, Heather Hall, John and Cindy Olnes, and others for an unforgettable day. The weather was fine (mid-twenties, high overcast), snow conditions were perfect, and crowds were friendly and encouraging.

As a recreational skier with basically no racing experience outside of Ski for Light, at first I felt triumphant completing 25 kilometers in just two hours, forty-five minutes: I'd even found the energy, in the final few kilometers, to power uphill past many others, finishing a respectable sixth in my fortysomething age division. (I believe the chocolate-nut bar I snagged at the last aid station may have helped.) Later I was humbled to learn that three women over the age of 60, and several pre-teen girls, had beaten me soundly. I realized that cross-country skiing truly is a sport for life, rewarding one's efforts with years of enjoyment in the great winter outdoors. Plus, in this case: free pizza! I won't tell you how much I ate in Anchorage after speed-skiing for nearly three hours, but I will say that

every bite was delicious. Give this race an A-plus for food *and* scenery.

The experience got us all thinking about other Ski for Light friends who will be in Anchorage as our own 2014 event winds down, and who might embrace the challenge of a 25K finale before heading home. Could that be you? Here's what you do.

1) Honestly gauge your own skiing ability, crowd comfort level, and endurance. The 25K Classic race division is appropriate for strong VIP or MIP skier/guide teams capable of skiing on a single track, with the guide either in front or behind. (I think Peter and I will use headsets, and we'll practice single-track skiing together beforehand, since we're accustomed to skiing side by side in parallel tracks at SFL. No such luxury here.) Note that the only passing lane during the Classic race is the skate lane, which will be in constant use by faster, often much faster, skate skiers. For this reason, it is essential that skier/guide pair wear bright "Blind Skier" or "Guide" notification bibs - you can order some snazzy reusable ones for ten bucks at www.reliableracing.com, attaching your official Tour numbers to those with safety pins - and to exercise extreme caution when passing. Tour organizers attempt to minimize passing conflicts by grouping participants into waves of about fifty skiers, departing every two minutes, based on everyone's estimated time for the course (which you supply when you register).

The trail itself is mostly flat or slightly downhill, which is why veterans sometimes call this race "the double-pole derby." There is a long uphill section toward the end that will push your endurance - it certainly did mine - and a few tricky dips, but otherwise nothing too technical.

If you've never skied 25K before, a good starting point for estimating your time is to multiply your usual 10K race time by three. Last year about 250 people participated in the Tour of Anchorage 25K Classic division, with many skiers taking three to four hours and quite a few taking up to six hours to finish, so if you can ski 10K in less than two hours without killing yourself, this should be doable for you. Food, liquids, and first aid are available at stations located every five to eight kilometers along the trail, and anyone experiencing difficulty can leave the course at any of these points.

Still, let me emphasize: This is not a Ski for Light event. Many Tour participants will never have shared a trail with disabled skiers before. As the saying goes, enter at your own risk.

2) Find a partner - or two. If you're a MIP, VIP, or

guide in search of someone to ski the Tour with, reach out to people you've successfully partnered with in the past, or post a message to the SFL email distribution list; both Ski for Light and the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage also have Facebook pages where you can put out a request. As the time draws nearer, Ken Leghorn and I can help match up those still in need of guides - but because this is an especially long and demanding event for any guide, skiers should make every effort to line up their own partner, ideally someone they've skied with before and/or a veteran of such events. It might be wise for some MIPs or VIPs to line up two guides who might tag-team over the lengthy course and supply a ready back-up in case one guide needs a break.

3) Sign up on the Tour of Anchorage website.

Registration opens November 1 at http://www.anchoragenordicski.com/tour_of_anchorage.html. The cost is \$60 before December 31, \$80 after Feb. 24, and \$100 on race day. Be sure to put down the same estimated time as your skiing partner(s), so you'll be assigned to the same starting wave - and be conservative, taking rest periods into account. After the skier and guide have registered on-line with the same estimated time, send a follow-up email with subject line "Attention Meg" to nsaa@alaska.net. Tell Meg your names, and she will assign pairs consecutive bib numbers and make a note for the race officials.

4) Arrange for a late departure Sunday and/or extra night lodging. Most participants in the Tour should be able to book flight departures from Anchorage in the late afternoon or evening, but those wishing to overnight Sunday at the Hilton will be able to do so at the SFL rate. Be aware that if your roommate is not staying for the extra night, your double room will become a single, and you'll be responsible for the difference in cost - or you might be able to hook up with another single to share the savings.

5) Consider transportation. The 25K race begins at 9:30 a.m. Sunday, March 2, at Alaska Pacific University, a twenty-minute drive from the Hilton Hotel. The race ends at Kincaid Park, which we will all get to know over the Ski for Light week. Tour organizers offer shuttle buses from there back to the start, and will also transport your day pack (with warm clothes or other items you don't want to carry while racing) from the start zone to the finish line. But because this is also when most Ski for Light participants will be returning home, and a busy day for local transportation providers in general, participants will have to be responsible for their own

rides. We will try to line up shared taxis, locals with extra car space, and other ways for our people to get to the Tour and back, but again: this is not a Ski for Light event.

More questions? Email me at jycoppens@gmail.com, or Ken Leghorn at kenleghorn@gmail.com. We'll do our best to help.

I hope many of you will think about skiing the Tour this year, or at least coming out to cheer us on. Maybe some Anchorage skiers and volunteers who've never heard of us before will go home thinking, "Ski for Light - I wish I'd done that!"

A Toronto Girl Goes Into the Woods: Trek for Light Montana - Aug. 3-7, 2013.

By Dorothy Dudek

I love to hike, and love it even more when I can go with someone who may not be able to access the woods on their own. I thus found myself for my third time as a guide at the annual Trek for Light Montana, which, like Ski for Light, is fabulously habit-forming. The event took place in the Lewis and Clark National Forest's Belt Mountains of central Montana, about 90 GPS-confounding miles south-east of Great Falls. Our group of 13 camped at a de-commissioned ranger station, a two-story cabin listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The cabin was completed in 1908, a time when rangers typically built their own stations, the old maps on display and period furniture serving as lovely reminders of its original purpose.

It was a rustic experience, with no plumbing or electricity, but we had everything we needed and more. Nancy, our camp cook, turned out a variety of fresh, multi-course meals as if by magic. After breakfast each morning we gathered on the porch with our hike leaders Hans, Ed, and Mike, and set off on a day hike to a different location, along the nearby creek, across the woods and meadows, or through a canyon. There were usually two hike options, depending on how far one wanted to go.

Visually impaired participants were matched with a sighted guide and from there the guiding style was directed by the VIP; some preferred holding a walking stick horizontally, with the guide in front sending signals by raising or twisting the stick, for example, to note upcoming changes in terrain or

hazards. Traversing the wilds, our two canine participants got in touch with their inner wolves while staying adorable and good.

After our hikes, sometimes exhausted, we took screamingly cold dips in the creek and gathered on the porch for refreshments and relaxation before dinner. This was one of my favorite parts of the day. We told jokes and traded notes about that day's hike, encouraging each other to challenge ourselves (more bushwacking, anyone?), reflecting on the accomplishments of our personal bests, and sharing an affection for nature that is truly infectious.

I find that the more I hike, the more I enjoy and benefit from it, and I believe this could be true for most people. The trees and mountains provide beautiful scenery, but I also love the deep-breathing of fresh air, perfumed with evergreens, the birdsong, and how delicious lunch tastes when you've been carrying a backpack up and down hills. There is something incomparable about the air found around trees, which is full of thousands of types of beneficial microscopic compounds, the complexity and benefits of which scientists are only beginning to understand.

I send my heartfelt thanks to the organizers of Trek for Light Montana, who made this Canadian city-girl feel so welcome and who do their work with such great warmth and easy-going competence.

Ridderrenn 2014

The 51st annual Ridderrenn will be held in Beitostølen, Norway Sunday, March 30 to Sunday, April 6, with the actual 20 kilometer race on Saturday, April 5.

Ridderweek is a wonderful opportunity to ski, make new ski friends, enjoy wonderful Norwegian hospitality, and to learn more about the program that spawned Ski for Light.

The week is much like the Ski for Light week, with evening programs, dances, a talent show, and a live auction that raises money for the Ridderrenn. There are a couple more opportunities to challenge yourself on the trails during the week: a biathlon, using laser rifles, and a 5 k race for women and a 10 k for men. There is also an alpine slalom race for mobility-impaired skiers and VIPs with some vision. During the alpine race on Friday, there's also a picnic so you can enjoy hot dogs wrapped in lefse or hamburgers while cheering on the racers.

Beitostølen is a summer and winter resort town, with a downhill ski area and many kilometers of Nordic ski trails in the area. There are some shops, restaurants, bars, a couple of grocery stores, and ski shops.

After the week in Beitostølen, about 3 hours from Oslo, we'll spend a couple of days sightseeing in Oslo, a beautiful and easy to navigate city.

It's a great trip and I'll be leading a special interest session during SFL week to fill you in on what to expect for the trip to Norway.

You will want to plan to leave the U.S. no later than Friday, March 28 for the overnight trip and arrival in Oslo on Saturday, March 29.

If you have questions about the Ridderrenn, feel free to contact me via e-mail, mlelmquist@aol.com, or by phone at 515-279-3681.

The SFL Silent Auction!

Plans are already being made for the Silent Auction in Anchorage, Alaska for 2014! Please help us by donating items - large or small. Handmade items, something local from your area, unique items for dogs, specialty foods - are welcome and are sure to be popular in this year's silent auction. This is a great opportunity to showcase your work and directly make a huge impact on our community with your contribution. The Silent Auction is a fun and very important part of our week. The auction plays an important role in financing our Ski for Light events. One of the highlights for many includes previewing the goodies during the afternoon and being awed by the generosity and talent within our community. The bidding becomes lively and spirited - an event surely not to miss.

You can bring your donation with you or you can send it to:

Ski for Light Silent Auction
Sons of Norway
Viking Hall
8141 Briarwood St.
Anchorage, AK 99518

Your item will be stored until the SFL week. Thanks so much - we can't wait to find out what you are bringing!!

Any questions? Contact Rich Milstead at richmilsteadt@msn.com



He's Sailing on the Sloop John B: A Tribute to Kendall Bodden

By Mike Brace, CBE

Editor's note: As many of you know, long-time, much-loved Ski for Light and Ridderrenn VIP Kendall Bodden passed away at his home in London this October. Below is a loving tribute written by his friend and countryman, Mike Braice, who skied for decades with Ken. Special thanks to Simon Butler for sharing this with us, and to Mike for his permission to print it here.

Kenny was a man of many parts: a keen cricketer for Metro in the 1980s and 1990s, a regular skier with the Metro members at the annual Norway ski week, a very competent skater and athlete, a Member of the British Paralympic Ski Team, a fantastic musician and entertainer, a champion of human rights and the oppressed and a great friend to anyone in need.

Kenny was born in Panama, went to school in Jamaica and then college in England. I was always confused when I was with Kenny how, a Spanish speaking Panamanian with a Mancunian (Manchester for Yanks) accent was living in the East London area of Hackney and competing for Britain! I spent many hours with Kenny participating in two of his key passions, sport and music. Kenny, on the surface, was always laid back about his sport but, although he was competitive, he was much more content than the rest of us, to prove things to himself rather than succeed in someone else's eyes. It is the singing to his superb guitar accompaniment that I remember and will treasure most. We would sing for hours whether just for our own enjoyment or to entertain others. When at ski training camps in Rjukan, Norway, we would sing well into the early hours of the morning with our Danish counterparts. At the annual Ridderrenn in Norway Kenny often topped the bill at the talent show and the song "Sloop John B" became a de facto theme tune. We sang at Peter Young's funeral wake and we frequently sang at parties with songs ranging from traditional folk songs, Irish songs and ballads to the delicate refrain of "bash it, crash it" ringing throughout many a bar or living room.

Kenny had eye cancer as a child which was poorly treated, recovered from a recurrence of cancer several years ago, and seemed to be unperturbed by anything life threw at him. He worked as a piano tuner for many years but not being

content with having one string to his bow, also studied massage and operated as a masseur from his home in Hackney.

His own personal integrity was very important to Kenny and he acted upon his political views and supported, for example, many of the demonstrations against apartheid in South Africa.

He was a great friend and great fun to be with and he enriched everyone whose lives he touched. He'll be greatly missed by us all.

Regional Roundup

Here is the list of winter 2014 events organized by SFL Regional Affiliates, SFL Canada and SFL Japan. For the latest information, visit www.sfl.org/regional.html.

Black Hills Regional Ski for Light

January 20 - 23, 2014

Come join us for our 35th annual Black Hills Regional Ski for Light event. Ski daily at Terry Peak Ski Area and Wharf Resources Area. Both Alpine and Nordic skiing are offered to the blind, visually impaired, and physically challenged. All skill levels are welcome from beginner to experienced skiers. Lodging is in Deadwood, South Dakota. Evening activities are centered in this historic western town. Transportation is provided between the ski venue and Deadwood. The cost of the event is \$200 which includes a banquet ticket. For additional information visit www.bhsfl.org

Colorado Regional Ski for Light

January 31 - February 2, 2014

31st Annual Event

Snow Mountain Ranch

Granby, Colorado

Cost \$89

Contact: Brenda Bertrand, telephone: 303-789-8342

Email: bbertrand@craighospital.org

Michigan Regional Ski for Light

January 17 - 19, 2014

Higgins Lake, Ralph A. MacMullen Conference Center
Roscommon, Michigan

This is a full service event with accommodations, meals, entertainment and lots of great skiing for every skill level. Online registration starts October 15, 2013, with early registration discounts. Go to www.msfl.org for additional information.

Montana Regional Ski for Light

2014 plans pending. For latest information visit www.trollstegan.com/sflmt.

New England Regional Ski for Light

First trip: January 3 - 6, 2014

Craftsbury Outdoor Center,

Craftsbury Common, Vermont

Cost: \$280 prior to Dec 2, 2013; \$300 thereafter.

Our annual trip to one of NERSFL's favorite winter places.

Ski right from the lodge. Great food! Trip includes three

nights lodging double occupancy with hall baths, nine

delicious, healthy meals from Friday evening through

Monday lunch. Trail passes are included. There will be

opportunities for cross country skiing and snowshoeing.

Second Trip: March 14 - 16, 2014

Bretton Woods Nordic Center, Bretton Woods, or Bear Notch Ski Touring, Bartlett, in the White Mountains of New Hampshire

Lodging: The Wayside Inn, Bethlehem, N H

Cost: \$185 prior to Feb 14, 2014; \$205 thereafter.

This location has become yet another favorite venue for

NERSFL. It offers double rooms overlooking the

Ammonoosuc River and features meals prepared by the

award winning chef/owner. Price includes ski passes, two

breakfasts, 2 bag lunches and Saturday dinner.

For additional information about either trip contact Marie

Hennessy, Telephone: 781-321-1071

Email: cnppr@verizon.net

Northeast Pennsylvania Regional Ski for Light

January 20 - 26, 2014

Land of the Vikings, Sherman, Pennsylvania

Cross country skiing, snowshoeing, tobogganing, hiking

and other activities. Visit www.nepasfl-sfh.org for more

information and application forms.

Puget Sound Regional Ski for Light

Six Saturday day trips from Seattle via chartered bus to:

Trollhaugen Sons of Norway Lodge

Erling Stordahl Snow Park, Stampede Pass, Washington

Dates for 2014 are January 11 and 18, February 8 and 15,

March 8 and 22. For additional information contact Deng

Kong at DKong@seattlelh.org.

Sierra Regional Ski for Light

22nd Annual 3-Day Event

March 8 - 10, 2014

Tahoe Donner Cross Country Ski Area

Truckee, California

The bus will depart from Sacramento early Saturday

morning; those coming from out of town will spend Friday

night at the Fairfield Inn in Rancho Cordova. We plan to

celebrate another fun SRSFL event, so please do come join

us - incredible trails, incredible food, and incredible people!

For all the details, including cost and applications, please

contact Cindy Quintana at cindyq12345@sbcglobal.net.

Saturday Day Trips For Children and Adults

January 25, February 8 and March 22, 2014

Tahoe Donner Cross Country Ski Area

Truckee, California

For additional information about day trips contact Betsy

Rowell at betsy.rowell2@gmail.com.

Wisconsin Regional Ski for Light

February 7 - 9, 2014

Wisconsin Lions Camp

Rosholt, Wisconsin

Contact for visually impaired skiers: Bev Helland

bevhelland@yahoo.com.

Contact for guides: Mike Graper getgraper@gmail.com.

Ski for Light Canada

35th Annual Event

Monday, February 3 - Sunday, February 9, 2014

William Watson Lodge, Kananaskis, Alberta

For additional information contact Barry Nelson at

barrynel@telus.net.

Ski for Light Japan

2014 plans pending. For latest information visit

www.sflj.org

The SFL Bulletin

Editor: Peter Slatin, pslato@gmail.com

Layout and graphics: Bjørg M Dunlop, bjorgmd@aol.com

Electronic version: Larry Showalter, larrysho@mindspring.com

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If you wish to change formats, please send your request to: bulletin@sfl.org.

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In addition to an online edition that may be read in your browser,

you will find a downloadable pdf version of the current issue.

For future Bulletins, remember that your contributions and feedback are always most welcome.

You may submit articles as e-mail or as a Word attachment; if you do not have e-mail, you may send a typed article through the mail. Send all items to:

Peter Slatin, 255 West 108th Street, Apt. 8A-1, New York, NY 10025

The deadline for the Spring 2014 Bulletin is April 1, 2014. We look forward to hearing from you.

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SKI FOR LIGHT, INC.

1455 West Lake Street
Minneapolis, MN 55408-2648

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Many of these companies have stood behind us for years – and we're grateful.

Be sure to think of our friends when you're gearing up for your next adventure.

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